

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-13 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 9, 11-13 are independent. In the Final Office Action dated June 30, 2004, Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and Claims 2, 5, 6, 8, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a). Following this response, Claims 14-23 remain in this application, Claims 1-13 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 103(a)

In the Final Office Action dated June 30, 2004, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and Claims 2, 5, 6, 8, and 10 under 35 U.S.C §103(a). Because, Claims 1-13 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been rendered moot.

II. New Claims

Claims 14-23 have been added to more distinctly define and to round out the protection for the invention to which Applicants are entitled. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable over the cited art and that they add no new matter.

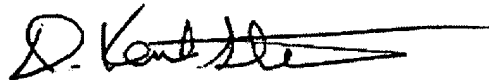
III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicant decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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